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Title: Stats-y Snapshots from a Multidisciplinary Research Centre

Abstract:

It's been about 20 years since the Centre for Health Service Development (CHSD), with a staff of 2 researchers, began business at the University of Wollongong. The team has now expanded to more than 50 members, including full-time and part time staff and research associates. Because of this growth and the development of a number of sub-centres, the group is now re-forming as the Australian Health Services Research Institute (AHSRI).

AHSRI works as a strong multidisciplinary team and the staff have qualifications and expertise in about eighteen disciplines. About half of the team have previous experience working in policy, management and clinical positions in the health system. The applied statistics team within AHSRI now comprises 10 staff members with a variety of backgrounds.

As a self-funded research centre, staff work on projects under contracts, often with government departments and agencies. With the health reforms currently being undertaken by the Australian federal and jurisdictional governments, there has been a surge in work for people with quantitative skills. As with all our projects, the focus is on producing outputs that are easily understood, and that can be of practical use to decision makers in health and community care.

In this presentation, a number of issues faced by the statistical team working in this context will be discussed. Several projects will be described, with a focus on the classification development work that underpins a lot of what we do.